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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/550,744

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Devan Govender

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12/24/2009

MCDONNELL BOEHNEN HULBERT & BERGHOFF LLP
300 S. WACKER DRIVE
32ND FLOOR
CHICAGO, IL 60606

EXAMINER

AHMED, MASUD

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3714

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

12/24/2009

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/550,744	Applicant(s) GOVENDER ET AL.	
	Examiner MASUD AHMED	Art Unit 3714	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 November 2009.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 9, 11-15, 17-26, 28-32, 34-42 and 45-54 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 9, 11-15, 17-26, 28-32, 34-42 and 45-54 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 11/19/2009 has been entered.

Response to Amendment

Applicant has amended claims 9, 26 and 45, 50. Examiner has considered amendment to the claims very carefully and addressed them below.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 9, 11-15, 17-26, 28-32, 34-42 and 45-54 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

2. Examiner has addressed the amended portions of the claims respectively.
3. A new interpretation of the independent claims 45 and 50 provided below addressing the added limitations.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

2. **Claims 9 and 26** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. Applicant has amended the claims to recite ***“wherein the a priori promotion credit is available to the player for immediate use for wagers without condition, said system”***, and pointed out to the specification’s **background** of the invention of page 1 line 30- page 2, line 7 for support. Respectfully this portion of the specification clearly states that players are given credit based on the purchased wager, therefore this is a condition. Thus the claim language is not fully supported by the applicant's specification.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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3. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

2. Claims 9, 11-15, 17-26, 28-32, 34-44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acres (U.S. 6712697), in view of AAPA (applicant's admitted prior art), further in view of Brosnan et al (7,063,617).

Regarding claims 9 and 26, Acres discloses a system for administering promotions associated with a wagering application in which a player purchases credit to make wagers on a game of chance (Col 4, Lines 35-55). Acres disclose:

a credit administration facility operable to maintain a credit account for the player wherein the credit administration facility is operable to automatically determine the balance of the credit account of the player as a function of any credit purchases made by the player, wagers made by the player and their corresponding payouts, and any a priori promotion credit awarded to the player (Col 6, Lines 62-67; Col 7, Lines 1-7), it should be noted that the priori credit is awarded to the players immediately to be wagered on the machine (abstract) , the credit administration facility being instructable to display the balance of the

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credit account to the player on a display means (Figure 2; Col 7, Lines 1-7), wherein the credit administration facility is further operable to maintain a non cashable sub account corresponding to a portion of the player's credit account that is not redeemable for monetary value and to maintain at least on play through sub account for the player (Col 9, Lines 63-67; Col 10, Lines 1-9). Acres specification clearly discloses the following on col 5, line 60-col 6 line 14:

"One way in which account credits may be applied to a player's account is as an **incentive to open the account**. In other words, when the account is opened by the casino, an account credit, e.g., \$5, is applied to the account. The following Table 1, which is described in more detail below, sets forth the sequence followed by the player to redeem the account credits for play on EGM 12.

(1) TABLE 1 1. Player account information, including account credits and points, is stored in MCI 50 RAM responsive to insertion of card 66 into reader 60. 2. Player places wager by inserting bill into bill acceptor 68 or coin into the coin acceptor (not shown). 3. Player plays game by pushing spin button 53. 4. Responsive to play, the account credits are automatically debited in the amount of the wager and applied to credit meter 70. 5. Steps 3 and 4 are repeated so long as the player wishes to play. 6. When the player is finished playing, he or she pushes cash-out button 74 and withdraws card 66 from reader 60."

Which means players purchase the credit to receive incentive or a priori promotion credit in very similar way applicant's claim of " a player purchase credit to make wagers on a game of chance and can use a priori promotion credit awarded to the player to make wager..." by giving the claim it's broadest reasonable interpretation. Further more applicant has disclosed the following in the background of the application:

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“It is usual for this promotion credit given to the player to be a percentage of the amount of credit purchased by the player. The promotion credit is intended for use by the player to wager on games of chance or skill offered by the online casino. ***This type of credit is available to the player for immediate use for wagers*** and will be termed, for convenience, as a priori promotion credit.” Therefore the limitation as admitted by the applicant in the background of the application would have been within the knowledge of ordinary skilled artisan at the time of invention.

However Acres is silent on disclosing non-cashable sub-account, from the disclosure of Acres we can make the determination that Acres makes distinction of player's cashable credits and non-cashable credits such as comp points that can be used towards meals or entertainment. Brosnan an art of record discloses wins of restricted or non-cashable credits in a game machine, where he discloses on col 10 lines 20-51 how the cashable and non-cashable credits are allocated into the separate accounts for the players (see FIG 4); therefore it would have been obvious to ordinary skilled artisan at the time of invention to separate the accounts to segregate cashable points or credits from non-cashable credits or points so that the casino and the player can easily make the distinction over players available credits for cashing out or wagering.

Regarding claims 11, 28, in which the credit administration facility is instructable to display a balance of the non cashable sub account to the player on the display means (Figure 2; Col 7, Lines 3-7).

Regarding claim 12, 29, in which the credit administration facility detects the award of a priori promotion credit to the player, the priori promotion credit having a corresponding quantum and a corresponding play through multiplier (Col 7, Lines 14-26; Col 8, Lines 1-23). The credit administration facility gives a bonus in form of credit to the account credits. Since the account credits must be wagered before they are cashed out, though not specifically cited, it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that a play through multiplier or requirement is inherent.

Regarding claims 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 30, 31, 34, 35, 36, 41, 42 in which the credit administration facility increments a balance of the player's non cashable sub account by the quantum of the priori promotion credit (Figure 2; Col 7, Lines 3-7), and in which the at least one play through sub account for the player includes a play through sub account and a play through achieved sub account (Col 9, Lines 63-67; Col 10, Lines 1-9). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that although the account credit is not split into further sub accounts, it is functionally equivalent as there is no further benefit of the sub accounts other than to keep track of the non cashable credits.

Regarding claim 15, 32, in which the credit administration facility is instructable to display a balance of the at least one play through sub account to the player on the display means (Figure 2; Col 7, Lines 3-7).

Regarding claim 20, 37, in which the credit administration facility debits the balance of the player's credit account and the balance of the non cashable sub account with the size of the wager and credits these balances with a payout arising from the wager if successful (Col 6, Lines 62-67; Lines 7, Lines 1-7).

Regarding claim 21, 38, in which the credit account facility clears the balances of the play through required the play through achieved sub accounts when the size of the wager exceeds the balance of the non cashable sub account. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that the balance of the account credit would be cleared if the wager exceeds the balance since the account credit is debited (Col 6, Lines 62-67; Lines 7, Lines 1-7).

Regarding claim 22, 39, in which the credit administration facility enables the player to request a cash out at any time (Col 4, Lines 57-59).

Regarding claim 23, 40, in which the credit administration facility automatically determines, in response to the player's cash out request, a balance of the player credit account that is redeemable for monetary value and displays the redeemable balance to the player on the display means (Figure 2; Col 4, Lines 60-67).

3. Claims 45-54 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acres (U.S. 6712697), in view of Brosnan et al (U.S. 7063617), further in view of Muskin (US 2005/0170883).

Regarding claims 45 and 50, Acres discloses all elements as described above, however Acres seems to lack disclosing a posteriori credit.

4. Brosnan teaches a posteriori credit (Col 12, Lines 17-21), where he discloses that usage of restricted credit result in extra 10% payouts. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the elements of Acres and Brosnan. One would be motivated to do so to persuade players to come back to the casino or gaming facility and to wager. All the claimed elements were known in the prior art and one skilled in the art could have provided a device to provide more excitement to a player by known methods with no change in their respective functions, and the combination would have yielded predictable results. Further more, even though it is well known in the art that player can earn the comps using land based or online casino system, applicant's claim of peer-to-peer is literally interpreted as an intended use, since whether the online casino acts as a banker or facilitator for the games, it provides player with the opportunity to wager, in very similar way when players play against each other at a physical casino instead of the house.

Muskin teaches a method and system of complimentary points that can be used at a land based casino as well as online casino. player can earn and redeem points online or

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at a land based casino (para 0025), therefore it would have been obvious to ordinary skilled artisan at the time of invention to modify Acres and Brosnan to include Muskin's land and online casino comps points wagering and redemption options to give player freedom of usage of their complimentary earn points and rewards in a physical casino or in an online based casino, where comps are separated by its nature in separate accounts such as cashable and non-cashable.

5. Acres also discloses:

Regarding claims 46, 51, wherein winnings arising from wagers made with the any a priori promotion credit contribute to the cashable portion when the first play through requirement is met (Col 7, Lines 14-26; Col 8, Lines 1-23).

Regarding claims 47, 52, wherein the any a priori promotion credit does not contribute to the cashable portion at any time (Col 7, Lines 14-26).

Regarding claim 48, 53, wherein the any a priori promotion credit progressively contributes to the cashable portion as a function of wagers made by the player on house edge services (Col 7, Lines 14-26).

6. **Regarding claims 49 and 54**, Brosnan teaches a posteriori promotion credit and Acres discloses because these credits must be wagered before they are cashed out, though not specifically cited, it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that a play through multiplier or requirement is inherent.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MASUD AHMED whose telephone number is (571)270-1315. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 10:00am-7:00pm, Alt Fri, EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Peter Vo can be reached on 571 272 4690. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/M. A./
Examiner, Art Unit 3714

/Peter D. Vo/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3714